

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 070 507

PS 006 180

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TITLE Trends in Child Care Legislation from the Perspective  
of the National Research Council Advisory Committee  
on Child Development.  
INSTITUTION Michigan Univ., Ann Arbor. Dept. of Psychology.  
PUB DATE Oct 72  
NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the  
American Psychological Association, (80th Honolulu,  
Hawaii, September 2, 1972); Report No. 15  
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29  
DESCRIPTORS \*Child Care; \*Child Development; Developmental  
Guidance; \*Developmental Psychology; Early Childhood;  
\*Legislation; \*Trend Analysis

ABSTRACT

A speech concerning legislation regarding child care is presented. Focus is on (1) legislation that currently is under consideration and its relation to earlier bills, (2) innovations in activities of the Office of Child Development for Fiscal 1973, and (3) ways in which developmental psychologists could play a more central and productive role in activities related to early childhood. (CK)

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TRENDS IN CHILD CARE LEGISLATION  
FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT

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Last summer the Office of Child Development proposed to the National Academy of Sciences, through the Division of Behavioral Sciences of the National Research Council, that a committee be formed to assist the Office by (a) conducting a long-range analysis and planning effort in the area of child development policy, and (b) evaluating the Community Coordinated Child Care Program. The Advisory Committee on Child Development was formed and includes, in addition to myself, APA members Nicholas Hobbs, Orville Brim, and Urie Bronfenbrenner. On the 14-person committee are representatives from pediatrics, child psychiatry, economics, social work, law, and early childhood education. The Committee has been working all year, and we expect to have a final report completed by January, 1973. The report dealing with the 4-C program has been submitted to the Office of Child Development.

I am talking today, not for the Committee, but as an individual, and none of the things I am going to say necessarily represents the opinions of the other members of the Committee. We have not reached the point in our discussions where we have formulated all the policy recommendations that will be included in our report.

Paper presented at APA meetings, Honolulu, September 2, 1972  
Not for quotation.

ED 070507

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I would like to focus our attention today on (1) legislation that currently is under consideration and its relation to earlier bills, (2) innovations in activities of the Office of Child Development for Fiscal 1973, and (3) ways in which developmental psychologists could play a more central and productive role in activities related to early childhood.

#### Current Legislation

We are faced with the possibility of providing services for young children to a degree that has not been thought possible. National interest in child development is unexceeded. For the first time in history, for example, child care legislation has been discussed at a national party convention. Magazines and newspapers have articles dealing with child development with increasing frequency. Current interest is, of course, the culmination of many, many years of consideration of this topic. As long ago as 1909 the following position was taken: "Children of worthy parents or deserving mothers should, as a rule, be kept with their parents at home. Agencies caring for children should be incorporated on approval of a suitable state board. The state should inspect all agencies which care for children. Educational work of agencies caring for children should be supervised by state educational authorities. Every needy child should receive the best medical attention, and be instructed in health and hygiene. Local child care agencies should cooperate and establish joint bureaus of information."

These words (with only slight changes) are from a special message to the Senate and House of Representatives delivered by President Theodore Roosevelt on February 15, 1909. His recommendations are as valid in 1972 as they were in 1909 and, for the most part, still have not been met satisfactorily. There still are problems in providing adequate health care, in inspecting facilities for children, and in establishing cooperation among agencies serving children.

Nor is the Advisory Committee on Child Development the first of its kind to consider national policies for young children. In fact, our committee is the fifth such endeavor in the past five years! There was a Presidential Task Force of 1967 chaired by J. McVicker Hunt, the Gorham Committee of 1967, which brought together persons from federal agencies dealing with children, the Joint Commission of Mental Health of Children in 1969, and in 1970, the White House Conference on Children. The policy recommendations made by these committees and conferences have been consistently sensible, and, again, have not been responded to satisfactorily. For example, the Presidential Task Force of 1967 analyzed the failure of many federal programs in the following way:

"Clearly, efforts and expenditures in behalf of children must be increased substantially if we are to equalize opportunity and to prevent the damage being done to many, especially to the child in families of low income. But even if the investment in the needs of young children were multiplied several times over, it is the sober conclusion of this Task Force that

tragedy and waste would continue on a massive scale. They would continue because many of the existing efforts to help children and their parents fail in essential regards."

"They fail because the services themselves are fragmented. The various agencies, each concerned with a restricted aspect of the family's problems, are located separately. For any given family the various activities are uncoordinated and their efforts may even be contradictory.

"They fail because they are inadequate and because they seldom provide a situation calculated to restore hope, confidence, and initiative in children's parents. All too commonly, parental loss of hope is passed on to their children in a cycle of poverty. When a father's earnings fall below what a mother and children could obtain from AFDC and what they can obtain only with the father absent, as is still the case in 28 of the states, the father becomes expendable. Children are left without fathers, and sons without a male model to emulate.

"They fail from ineffective use of professional help. Since professional helpers are in short supply, and since many of them look at families only from the limited standpoint of their own services, little happens. Moreover, many of the supports and services which children and parents need most could be provided by non-professional personnel with minimal training, working under professional guidance.

"They fail from attempting to intervene from the outside. Our services have attempted to 'do for' children and their parents instead of arranging the situation so that it encourages and rewards

their own constructive efforts, fosters functional cooperation among neighbors and mobilizes the rehabilitative power of local neighborhoods and communities."

The bases of failure of many federal programs remain the same five years later. Expansion of services does not necessarily mean the remediation of such problems, as we have seen.

The 1967 Task Force concluded from its analysis:

"What is needed is more concern for the conditions of early child development, but it is not merely more money or more manpower, important as these are. We need remedial programs to correct the damage that has been done in earlier years; we need preventive measures; we need to provide new measures to foster intellectual and motivational development. But what is needed above all is the utilization of our existing resources for the creation of new types of social institutions which will help the 60% of urban families and neighborhoods to exercise once again their unequalled potential power to foster the growth of children into healthy, competent, happy and responsible members of the society."

In the subsequent 150 pages the committee spelled out in detail the types of programs that would be needed to remedy the situation that exists in America. One may ask why such a report has not had wider circulation, why it is not a familiar document. Well, this report was in the papers of President Johnson and was unavailable until early this year when it was released as part of the Johnson papers on education. It will be available from the Johnson library in the near future.

PS 006180

Our problem, then, is not that analyses have not been made. Thoughtful people have been considering the problem of early child development and possible solutions for the past 60 years. It is distressing when one realizes how long it has taken the federal government to act, but it is encouraging, on the other hand, that we are so close now to significant new legislation. One cannot analyze all of the reasons we have reached this point, but the expanded number of women working, the affluence of the country, the research revealing the importance of early experience, and the demonstration of the value of group experiences for young children are among the most important. Impetus for legislation has come recently from many very diverse sources. For example, the President's Commission on School Finance suggested in 1971:

"We cannot ignore many research findings which lead us to believe that much of the lack of success in past efforts has been because we started too late in a child's life. We believe the Federal Government should encourage the development of early childhood education programs for all children and that financial assistance should be provided for children from low-income families."

Similarly, the Committee for Economic Development concluded a report in 1971:

"The most effective point at which to influence the cumulative process of education is in the early preschool years. There is evidence that effective preschooling gives the best return on the educational investment. Preschooling is desirable for all children,

but it is a necessity for the disadvantaged. Without it there is little possibility of achieving quality in education "

This, then, is some of the background from which recent legislation has developed. Many persons were hopeful that legislation would be enacted last year. As you know, the Mondale-Brademas effort passed both Senate and House, but was vetoed by the President. It is worthwhile to review the bases for the veto, and see how the 1972 Nelson Bill has attempted to respond to the criticisms introduced by President Nixon. The bill emanates from the Senate Subcommittee on Employment, Manpower, and Poverty, which includes Senator Kennedy, Mondale, Cranston, Hughes, Stevenson, Randolph, Taft, Javits, Schweitzer, Dominick and Beall. This bill has passed the Senate and was introduced into the House on June 21.

1. The President, in referring to the Mondale-Brademas bill, suggested that "such a bill would commit the vast moral authority of the National Government on the side of communal approaches to child rearing over and against the family-centered approach." How seriously does the President offer this criticism? It is interesting to note that less than two weeks after the child care legislation was vetoed the President approved a tax reform bill increasing on federal income tax the amount of deduction for child care to \$2,400 a year for one child, \$3,600 for two, and \$4,800 for the care of three or more children, effective for incomes up to \$27,000 per year. This legislation, of course, is of no value to families with low incomes. There would be no increased tax savings at all for families making, for example, \$5,000 or \$6,000 per year. The President apparently has had no concern about the

effects of such a bill in increasing the use of child care services and the resulting "destruction" of the middle-class and upper-class American family. Apparently, it is the families of the poor that need such protection.

The new bill attempts to respond to the criticisms of the President. By line 7 of the bill we read: "Child development programs must build upon the role of the family as the primary and the most fundamental influence on the development of children, and must be provided only to children whose parents or legal guardians request them." In a further effort to reassure the President and others that such legislation would not produce child communes, the following statement is included:

"Congress finds that the family is the cornerstone of healthy physical and psychological development for children, that the value of day-care services extends primarily to economically disadvantaged children, with special emphasis upon these children who have special developmental needs or other handicaps, and to other children for whom suitable care is not otherwise available, and that day-care services outside the child's own home must be designed to supplement and support, and never to replace, the parent-child relationship." The bill does not place a priority on day care, but allows parents to choose from among a variety of services, including Head Start, after school or full day care; prenatal services, in-home training, and child development classes for parents and prospective parents.

2. Another basis of the veto message was "day care centers for poor children are already provided in HR 1 and child

development programs would be a duplication of these efforts" and would be "redundant in that they duplicate many existing and growing federal, state, and local efforts to provide social, medical, nutritional, and educational services to the very young."

We should look, therefore, at what apparently has been the President's preferred approach, HR 1. This omnibus, controversial bill deals with Social Security amendments, Medicare, Medicaid, child care, and foster care. The bill would authorize in its first year \$750,000,000 for day care. This would pay for 291,000 spaces for preschoolers and 584,000 spaces for school age children. Priority would be given to mothers of school age children in work and training programs. Emphasis is placed on after school care because of the low cost of providing this type of care. It is not clear whether the mother would be able to refuse training or employment because available day care does not meet her or HEW standards. Child care for preschool children would include educational, health, nutritional, and other needed services whenever possible.

As for need, we can look at some statistics. In 1970, 32% of mothers of children under 6 years of age were working, and 52% of mothers of children from 6 to 17 years of age. Only a small proportion, 6%, of children were in day care centers. It is estimated that HR 1 would serve only 1 1/4 million of the 5 1/2 million poor children who could benefit from preschool education or after-school care. What is happening currently to these children? Half are cared for in their own homes by a relative or a babysitter. Nearly a third are cared for in someone else's home. Clearly, HR 1, income tax reform, or even the

Nelson bill only partially could meet the need that exists. It is very difficult to agree with the President's statement "neither the immediate need nor the desirability of a national child development program of this character has been demonstrated."

With the passage of the increase in Social Security benefits this summer, it appeared for awhile that there was little chance that HR 1, which passed the House 3 1/2 years ago, will be enacted. However, by fall interest in the bill was reawakened and its passage by the Senate seemed somewhat more probable.

3. Another basis for the veto message was: "Good public policy requires that we enhance, rather than diminish, parental authority and parental involvement--particularly in those decisive early years when social attitudes and conscience are formed and religious and moral principles are first inculcated." In response to this, the new bill would require parental involvement to the degree that 50% or more of the members of the councils that approve policy, curriculum and basic elements of these programs would be parents.

4. The prime sponsor problem also was introduced by the President. Who could apply for funds? The earlier bill would have made it possible for there to be approximately 7,000 potential prime sponsors. This has been reduced to approximately 2,000 in the current bill by allowing only communities or agencies of 25,000 or more persons to apply.

5. The President raised the question of where the qualified people would come from to staff child development centers, and the response in the Nelson bill has been to include funds

to support training at all levels, from post-graduate to paraprofessional. Funds for the support of research also are included: "Research to determine the nature of child development processes and the impact of various influences upon them, to develop techniques to measure and evaluate child development, to develop standards to evaluate professional and paraprofessional child development personnel, and to determine how child development and family services programs conducted in either home or institutional settings affect child development processes."

Of no slight importance is the fact that the Secretary of HEW would establish the Office of Child Development as being responsible for "the administration of the act, including research and evaluation, and for the coordination of programs including all child developmental efforts operated or funded by the Federal Government." This would mean that the Office of Child Development would have a definite legislative status for the first time, and that, if put into effect, there would be a central office for the coordination of programs dealing with children. In addition, a Child Development Research Council, consisting of representatives of OCD, Social Security, NIMH, NICHD, and other federal administrators would meet on a regular basis to assure "maximum utilization of available resources through the prevention of duplication of activities, establishment of a information bank, recommendation of priorities for federally supported research and developmental activities, and a division of labor to assure maximum progress toward the achievement of the Act."

What best guesses can be given about the enactment of the Nelson bill, S 3617? It has passed the Senate, and now faces a vote in the House. Differences in interpretation will have to be ironed out before it could be presented to the President. It is, of course, politically a very sensitive bill. There are diverse opinions, and as the new Brookings report on the 1973 federal budget states:

"Decisions about day care and early childhood programs are likely to provoke a heated national debate over the next few years, not only because the budgetary consequences might be large, but because sensitive emotional issues are involved. How should the responsibility for children be divided between the family and society? Should mothers of small children work? The spectrum of views is wide..."

The financial commitment is great. In the first year the cost would be 150 million for planning, training, providing technical assistance and other activities necessary to prepare for the implementation of the Act, 1.2 billion for fiscal '74 and 1.6 billion for fiscal '75. Since the bill has "a central requirement that child development programs must, in fact, be developmental--centered in the needs of children and the family--and not custodial in nature," costs are bound to increase. Providing free day care for children from poor and moderate income families could easily cost 12 to 15 billion in five years. The total spent in Fiscal '72 for all programs was 866 million, and for Fiscal '73, 969 million. Thus, disregarding the other issues, cost is going to continue to be of central concern. Will

endorsement of such a bill be politically adventitious? Can it be passed by election time? I do not know anyone who would make a firm statement now about the outcome. On the other hand, among informed people there is little doubt that within the immediate future some form of child care legislation will be passed.

#### Other Legislation

I can mention briefly other legislative activities that are related to early childhood. First, the National Institute of Education became operational in July of this year. The National Institute of Education will be independent of the Office of Education, with its own director. The model for the Institute appears to be something like the National Science Foundation or the National Institutes of Health. The budget for the first year of operation is expected to be 140 million, but 100 million of this is committed to continuation of programs that currently exist within the Office of Education. Appropriations for new programs will need to be funded through supplementary appropriations. The National Institute of Education will be concerned with a broad range of problems, among which will surely be research on various forms of early learning.

Another bit of interesting legislation was introduced in the House by Representative Harrington on June 29. In a letter describing this bill he states: "One segment of society most neglected in the House of Representatives is children. Because of the fragmented committee system, the problems of children such

as health, education, legal rights and environment are treated piecemeal. What the House needs is a coordinated approach to these problems. I have, therefore, introduced a bill providing for the establishment of a Select Committee on Children in the House..."

So we are at a point then, where many things could happen for the nation's young children--but just exactly what or when no one can be sure.

#### New Policies of the Office of Child Development

I would like to turn now to some of the innovative activities announced by the Office of Child Development during the past year. These were begun under the leadership of Ed Zigler, to whom we all owe a great debt for the remarkably effective role he has played during the past two years as the first Director of the Office. There are three new activities that should be mentioned: The Child Development Associate Program, new Day Care Standards, and innovations in Head Start.

Child Development Associate. Most of us really do not have a grasp of the enormity of the needs for personnel in the field of early childhood. Even if no new legislation were passed, it has been estimated by the Department of Labor that 23,000 new teachers will be needed in early childhood education each year between now and 1980 to cope with the increased enrollment in preschool programs. One response to this need was the announcement of plans for establishment of the profession of the Child Development Associate by Dr. Zigler last November. Dr. Zigler described the role of the Child Development Associate in a speech

before the National Association for the Education of Young Children in the following way:

"This person's role is seen as that of a competent professional staff person in the programs for young children who must (1) understand and be knowledgeable about children; (2) be able to provide valuable experiences for preschool children in part-time, full-time, or extended day care; (3) have achieved the minimum competencies of a good preschool teacher." Accreditation and certification would occur through demonstrated competency rather than only on completion of academic programs. The significance of this program is great, for it really does create a new profession, one that differs from traditional professions in that it is not based only or even primarily upon academic accomplishment. The Office of Child Development, in a report of the plan on April 24, spells out the details of the competencies that would be expected of the Child Development Associate, and they are laudable. The Nelson bill includes recommendations for the development of a program for training and certification of the Child Development Associate. It seems to me that this program merits a great deal of intensive discussion by developmental psychologists, for, depending upon the manner in which the Child Development Associate is accredited, it could mean the difference between requirements which would be crucial and appropriate for this field and which could be emulated by other fields vs. the easier and more variable criteria of the past which have often placed child care in inept hands.

Day Care Standards. The Day Care Requirements now in force for all federally supported day care are based on the 1968

Federal Interagency Day Care requirements. The Office of Child Development has coordinated an effort to revise and improve these requirements. These proposed standards, according to OCD, "outline the activities, guidance and experiences which day care operators must provide in order to enhance the physical, intellectual, and emotional development of children entrusted to them." They are more thorough than the previous requirements, define more clearly the components of developmental day care, specify ratios for caregivers and children, specify what program schedules must include, hold administering agencies accountable for arranging and ensuring that children receive appropriate health, psychological and social services, and a great many other things. These standards, if put into operation, would be, according to HEW, "an important step in the direction of providing developmental care to all children in Federal programs." It will be interesting to see how readily this extensive set of recommendations can become national policy.

Innovations in Head Start. Do we know where we want to put our money? Head Start, Home Start, Health Start, Parent-Child Centers, Day Care, Family Care or what? At present it appears that diversity is our best bet. Until we can demonstrate much more effectively than has been the case in the past which of these programs do what, we probably can spend our funds most productively by relying on a wide variety of plans. Plans for 1973 are responsive to such an argument. There are several features of plans for improving and innovating programs in Head Start. Efforts will be made to improve local performance.

Guidelines will be issued that outline the full range of benefits Head Start is to provide, including goals for social and emotional, as well as for cognitive development. An effort will be made to help local programs achieve these goals through technical assistance, both on-site and through information from other communities and programs.

Head Start programs initiated after April 1973 will be funded for only nine months within a 12 month period; funds will not be provided for full day care of children who are able to return to their own families. The goal of these actions is to reduce expenses. The difference between 9 and 12 month participation has not been found to be significant, and many children are being provided full day care even though they could be cared for at home for half a day.

Local programs will be urged to broaden the variety of approaches used in serving Head Start children and their families. Five major options will be offered to local communities: (a) the standard Head Start Model, (b) variations in center attendance, that is, allowing children to attend from two to five days a week; (c) home-based models in which the parents will be encouraged and assisted in carrying out their role in the development of their child; (d) double sessions will be allowed for more effective use of facilities and (e) local communities will be allowed to develop and submit their own programs for consideration for funding.

Several experimental programs also will be initiated. They will attempt to establish "Centers-with-Many-Programs", that is

centers that make it possible for children and their parents to receive the full complement of services within a single administrative unit. Greater efforts will be made to provide continuity between Head Start programs and experiences during the early elementary years by having aides follow children through the primary grades, and having Head Start children return to Head Start centers after school and during summer months for assistance with school work. Finally, efforts will be made to develop more satisfactory programs for handicapped children with special needs.

These innovations are responsive to criticisms and ideas that have come out of the past seven years of experience with Head Start. They are exciting, new, and interesting. But how much can be accomplished when funding for 1972 was approximately 364 million and for 1973, 369 million? One additional innovation is badly needed. There is an administrative jungle between Washington and local day care centers. Some way must be developed to help local communities find their way through this jungle if they are to do what they want and need to do for their young children. In this case it is not lack of funds, but the problems of complying with federal requirements before funds can be obtained.

#### Implications for Developmental Psychology

I would like to conclude by discussing several ways in which I think current federal activities in early childhood planning have implications for developmental psychologists. The passage of new legislation will be a source of both many new problems

and opportunities. National attention to scientific and social issues fluctuates, but everything indicates that there will be continuing focus upon young children during the next few years. We must begin to think seriously about how our field can make its optimal response to this national concern. Work on the Advisory Committee on Child Development has pointed out to me, sometimes painfully, what some of the needs are and how we might attempt to meet them.

1. Work on an interdisciplinary Advisory Committee leaves one with many impressions. For me, the strongest is that our conception of the child is fragmented, with members of each discipline looking at the child from only one point of view. Developmental psychologists have one way of looking at the child. They have certain views of the optimal conditions for growth and development, and it is on the basis of these views that they make their recommendations for federal policy. But economists, lawyers, political scientists, sociologists, and pediatricians operate from different bases, each with their views of the child. We are being asked what is best for children, what is economically feasible or sociologically desirable. Our problem on the Committee, and our problem as psychologists, is to address ourselves to the total needs of the child. We cannot do this unless we attempt to understand viewpoints of other disciplines. Parochial recommendations from each separate discipline will not go far in the formulation of federal policy. It is important, therefore, that psychologists, taking the lead if necessary, attempt to bring

members of different disciplines together so that in the future we will be able to discuss policies for children in a broader context than most people now find possible.

2. The whole area of training is awesome. How can these hordes of people be trained? How can the Child Development Associates be accredited? As far as I can see, universities have done little to expand their training opportunities in preschool education. Programs are either slightly modified versions of those that have been in operation for many decades or programs that have been developed usually have been diverted into extension services for training Head Start and day-care workers. Opportunities for training in administration, follow-up evaluation, or research on intervention are severely limited. Of course, one of the reasons why the programs have not been expanded is a lack of funds. Federal agencies such as NICHD have made limited funds available, but mainly for programs at the doctoral level and for students interested in careers in research. Other agencies have concentrated their efforts on the training of Head Start workers, paraprofessionals, and other workers for whom short-term, isolated courses were judged sufficient. There is a great need for the development of coordinated programs in early childhood education at all levels of training and for varying lengths of time. It seems to me that we should not sit idly until the floods come. We should have plans made so that expanded efforts at training could be instituted. This could be done by developing intra-university committees on child development, that would bring the

resources of various disciplines together in planning the most productive programs.

A great deal can be done with the investment of some time and a little money. Anyone interested in seeing what can be done in a year should write to the LBJ School of Public Affairs in Austin, where a group of graduate students has come up with an analysis of day care programs in Texas and a set of recommendations for future policies. There are pounds of literature from such places as AVCO, the Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies in Minneapolis, the Huron Institute in Cambridge, and other projects, with which at least some of our students should be familiar.

3. Most of the research done for Head Start and other programs has been a disaster. Bert Brim, after a review of this research has said, "Too much evaluation research has been done too poorly to be of any use except to give quasi-scientific reasons to let Congress do what it wants to do." Developmental psychologists, for the most part, have found it prudent to sit on their hands and let others get involved in this research. This decision, of course, has not been made without its reasons. Governmental officials, in trying to initiate rush-rush projects, did not have the sense of what it takes in terms of staff and time to develop satisfactory programs of evaluation research. Research is difficult to conduct on 11 month grants, with funding coming in the fourth month. Nevertheless, the results of some of this research are being used to point out the frivolousness of investing money in programs for young children. Is this because the programs were bad, because the wrong questions were asked in the research, or because many researchers went about answering the right questions in the wrong

way? There will be reason for criticism if new legislation includes reasonable conditions for the conduct of research and we fail to act. We do know how to do good research. For the present, we should be conducting seminars on evaluation of research, on curriculum development, and on other topics dealing with intervention programs in our developmental psychology programs. Students should be familiar with the good studies that have reached the pages of our journals, and with the failures, so that they will know what they should not do.

4. It seems to me that we have to become more aware of what is going on at the level of government. I am impressed by the other members of the Advisory Committee in their up-to-the-minute comprehension of the details of current legislation and activities in Washington. But the majority of psychologists are not accustomed to thinking of applications or implications of their research. How many developmental psychologists read the Congressional Record or copies of reports from the Senate or House on legislation related to children? How much do we, or most of our students, know about the workings of government agencies, such as NICHD, NSF, NIMH, OCD, OE, or NRC? How many are aware of what OCD or the new NIE may mean for our professional lives?

They are immense, entangled, pressing problems. We are confronted, however, with the rare coincidence of legislative, political, and scientific interest in the planning of early childhood programs. These programs may be one of the most optimistic sources of answers to the massive problems which our society faces--and developmental psychologists can and should play a significant role in these activities.